

***DEFENSE CONTRACT
MANAGEMENT (DCM)
AUSTRALIA***

***P C S
GUIDE
TO
AUSTRALIA***

PREFACE

The following has been prepared as an informal guide for personnel who are assigned to DCM Australia (Melbourne) and Canberra.

Some of the subjects are covered in detail, some are not. More information can be obtained by personal mail directly to your named sponsor. Also, electronic mail is an option. We know that your stay in Australia will be an enriching and rewarding experience once you take your first few steps. The guide was prepared to smooth the way over the inevitable early bumps associated with a move halfway around the world.

This guide was prepared with the assistance of members of the U. S. Department of Defense community in Australia.

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Passport Information

All personnel will comply with the requirements of the DoD Foreign Clearance Guide, DoD 4500.54-G.

All civilian personnel and their command-sponsored dependents and all military command-sponsored dependents must have either a blue-cover “no fee” passport or a brown-cover official passport. These passports have an endorsement indicating that the bearer is abroad on an official assignment of the U.S. Government. These requirements do not apply to local hire personnel or to any personnel or dependents who are not U.S. citizens.

All personnel and their dependents are encouraged, but not required, to have tourist passports in addition to their diplomatic, official or “no fee” passports.

Information Highlights

Official Name:	Commonwealth of Australia
Head of State:	The Monarch of the United Kingdom and Australia (represented by the Governor General, this position is primarily ceremonial)
Head of Government:	Prime Minister
Legislature:	Commonwealth Parliament (Senate and House of Representatives)
Area:	2,967,909 square miles
Boundaries:	North: Timor and Arafura Seas Northeast: Coral Sea East: Pacific Ocean and Tasman Sea South and West: Indian Ocean
Elevation:	Highest: Mt. Kosciusko (NSW) 7314 ft. Lowest: Lake Eyre (SA) 30 ft. below sea level
Population:	Australia: approximately 18 million Victoria: 4.8 million Melbourne: 3 million Canberra: less than 500,000
Capital:	Canberra, ACT (Australian Capital Territory)
National Language:	English
Literacy Rate:	99% of the population (excluding aborigines)
Monetary Unit:	Australian Dollar (decimal currency)

The Sponsor Program

Upon selection for a position in Melbourne or Canberra, the DCM Australia - Melbourne office will assign you a sponsor. If you are assigned to the Canberra area you will have a sponsor in Melbourne and in Canberra. Your sponsor will initiate correspondence with you in the aim of easing your transition to a new country. Do not assume that your move will be trouble free. Do not assume either, that your move will be a horror story that other people can point to as an example of how badly things can go. What is critical is your understanding of how much your success depends upon you.

Upon learning the name of your sponsor, take the time to sit down and get your sponsor acquainted with you. Do not wait for a letter to arrive. Your letters will cross in the mail and you should expect this. With the advent of electronic mail, you should be able to get a free flow of communication going in a timely manner. This will allow your sponsor to ask questions concerning family size, expected arrival date and possibly answer questions that may have direct impact on your acceptance of the assignment.

Temporary housing in Melbourne for a period following your arrival, will be located for you by this office. Temporary housing in Canberra will be located for you by your sponsor. Locating a permanent residence can take from 2 weeks to 2 months, depending on the availability of rental housing (December and January are particularly bad months for house rentals). Your sponsor will help you locate permanent housing if you desire. The U.S. Government will reimburse expenses incurred in temporary quarters for up to 60 days.

Household Shipments

All of your household goods will be sent to Australia as air shipments. They generally arrive in country within 4 to 8 weeks after the actual U.S. shipping date. If the arrival date does not coincide with your move to permanent housing, furniture can be rented on a week-to-week basis. Since this is not a reimbursable expense, it is best to coordinate your move-in with the arrival of your household goods.

Household Furnishings

One of the decisions that families make is what to bring and what to leave behind. A typical Australian house consists of a living room, dining room, kitchen, 3 bedrooms, bathroom with shower, separate toilet and laundry room. There is some variation, of course. Some houses have a family room, some have four or more bedrooms, many have an additional bathroom attached to the master bedroom (known as an ensuite). Houses may come with wall to wall carpets or polished wood floors. Only fairly new

houses have built-in closets (BIRs), central heating (in the living room, dining room and kitchen) and air conditioning. All houses, regardless of age, have limited storage space.

If you choose to bring a full shipment of household effects, include only those items you use on a regular basis. Large and small appliances may be brought from the U.S. (with transformers), rented or purchased in Australia.

American lamps will work here. It will be necessary to purchase plug adapters to fit into Australian power points. Do not bring light bulbs, they will not work. Bulbs to fit American lamps (screw-in bulbs) are available at most local stores.

Homes are usually fitted with a cooking range, so it is unnecessary to ship one. Ovens tend to be smaller than in the U.S., so you may not want to bring your favorite turkey roasting pan (it probably wouldn't fit!)

When deciding what other appliances to bring, such as blenders, mixers, microwave ovens, stereos, etc., check their power information plates. If the plate reads 110/220 volts and 50/60 Hz, then it will work in Australia with no alterations other than a plug adapter. If it states 110 volts and 50/60 Hz, then it will work acceptably from a transformer, although microwave ovens tend to be a little slow. If the plate does not state 50/60 Hz or states 60 Hz only, the appliance may work, but you do this at your own risk. Most electric clocks will never operate properly in Australia.

Another consideration is the possibility of repair work. Spare parts (with certain exceptions) must be ordered from the U.S. Finding a qualified repairman to work on American appliances will not be cheap, or easy to locate.

If you decide to bring appliances, transformers should be purchased before leaving the U.S. However, in Melbourne, the American Women's Auxiliary to the Melbourne Royal Children's Hospital does sell used transformers from departing members. In Canberra, the Embassy of the United States of America provides information on families leaving the area and there are usually some transformers and small appliances for sale. The average family has one or two large transformers (1000 watts) and two or three smaller ones. In the U.S., transformers can be purchased from General Electronics at 4513 Wisconsin Avenue in Washington, DC 20016, telephone (202)362-8300.

Furniture and furnishings of all types can be purchased here, either new or used, but prices are generally higher than in the U.S. and the selection is slightly more limited. Although stoves, heaters and refrigerators purchased locally are significantly more expensive than those purchased in the U.S., there are several advantages: ease in repairs and servicing, appropriate size to fit spaces in kitchens and ease of selling on departure. Several sources are available to locate and purchase second hand refrigerators, transformers, TVs and other appliances. Portable air conditioners should be left behind. The compressor motors overheat, very large transformers are

required for their usage and many windows are not designed to fit a window air conditioner. For the few extremely warm days you may have in the Summer, portable fans are sufficient.

You should consider space restraints before bringing large items, especially bedroom furniture. Australian bedrooms are smaller than those found in the U.S.. Many people find they need extra rooms for dressers and bureaus, as only the bed would fit in their bedroom. Closet space will be limited, possibly non-existent. In most older homes, free-standing wardrobes are required to serve as closet space. Utility rooms and/or kitchens usually do not have adequate space for installation of American size refrigerators, washers or dryers. (Please note that these comments apply primarily to the older homes located closer to the city center. As you move out away from the city center, newer homes with American features can be found.) If you prefer to not bring furniture or other household furnishings, everything can be rented. Prices are reasonable and vary somewhat, but it is important to note that rental costs are not reimbursable.

Melbourne and Canberra have a European TV signal (PAL-B) and U.S. system (NTSC) TV sets will not pick up this signal. Used TV sets are available through several sources. Locally made video games and VCRs will not function with a U.S. television set. A U.S. VCR will not record Australian broadcast signals. If you plan to buy an Australian VCR, standard videotapes will fit. We do not recommend you bring a U.S. TV in your shipment. Current Australian customs procedures require that all TVs be removed from incoming shipments and sent to a testing station for conformance with Australian electrical safety standards. This does not apply to computer video monitors. If your TV set requires modification, it will be modified at your expense. Additionally, this modification may render the TV inoperable upon return to the U.S.. Multi-system televisions and VCRs can be purchased through the Military Exchange.

CB and Ham radio equipment can be imported if on the list of Australian approved equipment. Unlisted equipment must be released to the local communication agency for testing. You must be in possession of a valid operator's license for the equipment you are importing. An operator's license can be obtained by presenting a current U.S. operator's license and registering with the local communications agency. If you do not have a valid U.S. license, your equipment will not be released to you until you have completed license schooling and tests.

Automobiles

Automobiles are expensive in Australia. There is a high duty on imported cars and locally manufactured vehicles are also expensive. A four to seven year old automobile will cost between \$A6,000 to A\$15,000. New cars are priced from A\$15,000 to as high as you wish. This does not include registration of motor vehicle.

To register a motor vehicle in your name - for a vehicle to the value of A\$10,000, the transfer fee would be \$25, stamp duty \$400, bringing the total fees to A\$425. This amount will vary depending on the value your car. This stamp duty is not considered a tax for U.S. income tax purposes.

The registration for third party insurance which is compulsory through “Vic Roads” is a standard fee of A\$460 per annum. This covers insurance on public property and person liability only. This insurance stays with the car when it is sold.

You will then be required to insure your vehicle for either third party insurance against collision, fire and theft. Optional comprehensive insurance can also be taken out, and prices will vary considerably, depending on value of motor vehicle and insurance company. It is important to bring a letter from your U.S. insurance company describing your accident record (or lack of one). Australian insurance companies base their rates on your record of claims for the last five years. Without a statement that you have not made any insurance claims in the previous five year period, you may have to pay the maximum rate. Australian insurance companies charge an exorbitant premium for young (under 25) drivers. You have to be at least 18 to drive a vehicle without supervision in Victoria.

Driving License: A valid U.S. driver’s license is good for driving in a Victorian registered vehicle in any State in Australia for a period of 3 months only. After this time, you are required to get an Australian license. Normally both a written and practical test are required. The Melbourne office will provide a letter to the licensing agency, VIC Roads, stating that you will be in the country for a period of three years and request that a three-year license be issued. The written and practical test requirement will be waived, and you will be issued a three-year license for a cost of about \$50 AUD, to waive the requirement for a written and practical test. Proof is required that you have held a driving license for a period of 3 years and over. If you do not produce this proof you will be made a Probationary Driver and will be required to display a red “P” plate on your motor vehicle for a period of 3 years with certain road rules imposed upon you (mainly lower speed limits and zero alcohol limit) until a full license is issued to you.

In Canberra, visit the JAG office at the US Embassy and get a letter stating you are in Canberra under the Status of Forces Agreement (SOFA). This will allow you to take the written test and once you pass you will be issued a license equivalent to what you held in the States. The price varies for type of license. If wish to get a motorcycle license in Canberra make sure your current license references this or you will need to take the specialized courses offered by Stay Upright Motorcycle Techniques.

You are permitted to ship your left hand drive vehicle to Australia, but it is not recommended for the following reasons:

- a. Safety - Most vehicles in Australia are right hand drive and are always driven on the left hand side of the road, making visibility a problem, especially when trying to overtake.

- b. You must sign a bond stating you will pay 95% of the value of the vehicle if it is stolen or totaled within the first two years of the date it arrived in Australia. Insurance cannot be purchased to cover this cost. In Canberra the US Embassy JAG office will assist you with the bond information.
- c. Spare parts are difficult to obtain for U.S. made vehicles.
- d. There is a duty of 95% on imported parts plus shipping delays.
- e. Liability insurance on certain types of vehicles is prohibitively expensive.
- f. Size of your vehicle should be considered prior to shipment. Currently there are no restrictions to the size. However, expect problems with shipment and registration if you have a large vehicle..
- g. All left handed vehicles must be converted over to Australian Standards.
 - The headlights must be adjusted to the left
 - The rear indicators must be disconnected from the brake lights and a new set of indicators put on.
 - The parking lights must be clear not amber
- h. Registration of your vehicle is based on weight. The larger the vehicle, the more expensive the registration.
- i. To register a vehicle make sure you have the following paperwork
 - Vehicle Import Approval
 - Certificate of Inspection (Received at Registers Office)
 - Stamp Duty Exemption form from Office of Financial Management Revenue Office
- j. In Canberra, any vehicle that has an open bed for carrying items is registered as a commercial vehicle. (This means you pay more money)

If you still wish to bring your car to Australia, you should discuss it in more detail with your sponsor.

House Hunting

New arrivals must find their own housing and lease under private rental agreements. Your sponsor as well as other members of the office will do everything possible to help you locate suitable housing. The difficulty and time required to do this depends on your housing requirements, taste and pocketbook. Most new arrivals locate adequate permanent quarters within the sixty day period authorized for temporary quarters. You should be aware that the availability of housing is seasonal. As in the States, people tend to move around a lot more when children are out of school.

During the period of mid-December to end of January, housing is almost impossible to find, as Estate Agents and their staff (as well as almost everyone else) go on vacation. Even during the best periods, houses are not available in great numbers.

Rents vary according to the size and location of the housing. Rents are usually lower as the distance from the city center increases. Quick access to the beach naturally boosts rental prices. Rental rates are quoted by the week, but charged by the month. The monthly rate is actually 4.33 times the weekly rate. (Rent/Week * 52 weeks/12) A stamp duty is payable for the period stated on the lease. The stamp duty is a percentage of the rent and is usually less than A\$50. New tenants are required to give a bond (usually a month's rent) and the first month's rent is payable in advance. Leases are usually for a minimum of one year. Multi-year leases are harder to find, but may be desirable, since moving costs are not reimbursable (nor tax deductible).

Many houses and apartments do not have central heating, few have air conditioning, as air conditioning is only necessary for a week or two each summer. Most heating is done with electric or gas space heaters. Most houses have wall-to-wall carpeting; some supply curtains, even though the house is rented unfurnished. All kitchens are fitted with a cooking range.

Apartments, furnished or unfurnished, are usually easier to find and more modern than houses. The inner suburbs have more apartments than the outlying areas. Apartments that are close in and convenient to the city center are very expensive.

Rental prices will vary considerably:

- * Prices for flats or apartments can range from A\$150 - A\$450 per week, depending on the size, proximity to the city and public transportation and one's personal tastes.

- Older houses, usually in the more fashionable inner suburbs, will range in price from A\$300 to A\$450 per week. These older houses usually don't have central heating, unless they've been renovated. Heating will be confined to the living room /dining room area with space heaters in other parts of the house. Houses are often poorly insulated. Since they are constructed of solid brick, the summer heat is often easier to take. Often these inconveniences are outweighed by the charm of the Victorian architecture with large rooms, high ceilings, open fireplaces and leadlight glass windows.

- * Contemporary houses range from A\$250 to A\$450 per week. Often the new houses are not very well insulated, although they may have central gas heating. They are almost always brick with tile roofing. In newer areas, the houses and neighborhoods look very much like parts of the U.S., and may be just what you need to help you feel at home.

To offset some of these expenses, we receive a tax free Living Quarters Allowance (LQA) in addition to regular pay. The LQA varies as the exchange rate and housing survey results fluctuate. Check with your sponsor about the latest on this allowance.

Currency

Australia has a decimal system of currency. A dollar consists of 100 cents. Six coins are officially in use: five, ten, twenty and fifty cents (cupro-nickle), one and two dollar (gold-colored). Designs feature the monarch (Queen Elizabeth II) on the face and Australian birds and animals on the reverse; the fifty cent coin (12 sided) features the Australian Coat-of-Arms on the reverse. Commemorative fifty cent coins are often issued. The five and ten cent coins are not called nickels and dimes. Notes are issued in denominations of \$5, \$10, \$20, \$50 and \$100. The notes are different sizes and colors (larger notes for higher denomination). Each note has a metal thread running through it as an aid against counterfeiting, as well as a watermark.

The value of the Australian dollar is maintained by the Central Bank, against a market basket of foreign currencies. The Central Bank allows the dollar's value to float by small steps to avoid large fluctuations and limit currency speculation. As of January 1998, the exchange rate was approximately A\$1 - U.S.\$0.69. The exact currency rate can be supplied by your sponsor.

Banking

All types of banking activities and facilities are available. There are many bank facilities near work, with several bank branches in most areas. In Canberra, most of the US Embassy personnel bank in Kingston.

Travelers checks are not widely accepted and we do not recommend that you obtain Australian dollar checks in advance of travel to Australia. You can usually get a better exchange rate in Australia than in the U.S..

Personal loans are available, but interest rates are much higher than in the U.S.. There is no "truth in lending law" in effect, and quoted rates are often designed to disguise the true annual interest rate. You may wish to arrange a line of credit with your credit union or some other source in the U.S. before departing the States.

American Express, Diners Club, Visa and Mastercard are accepted widely throughout Australia and most of New Zealand. Credit card charges of about 21% to 24% per annum with a 6% state tax is levied against outstanding balances per month. Cash advances are also available with interest charges applied from the first day of the advance. Most service stations (gas) accept various credit cards. It is best to check with your local station should you wish to maintain an account.

Education

Dependent Education

Seasons in Australia are the reverse of those in the U.S. and so is the school year. School usually starts in the very first week of February and officially dismisses for summer vacation around the third week of December, although the higher grades may often leave after exams in late November. Shorter recesses of approximately 10 days duration, occur at Easter, June and September, making a four term school year.

Adequate schools are generally available in most areas. For this reason, a list of schools would not be appropriate here. It must be stressed that in some residential areas, state schools are inadequate and private schools must be used. In fact, it is a tendency amongst most DCM Australia personnel to send their dependents to private schools.

However, there are some excellent state schools with many facilities available to students of all ages. Students use public transport, walk, or bicycle to school, as public schools do not provide schools buses, although some private schools provide transportation.

The education system in Australia is divided into three basic levels - Primary (Grade Prep through 6), Secondary (Year 7 through 12), and Tertiary (University). Here we address only primary and secondary levels.

Pre-school (Kindergarten) facilities, both privately run and government sponsored, are available in most areas. In some areas, and in the more popular kindergartens, the waiting list is quite long. Tuition costs run from A\$20 per week in government sponsored schools to as much as A\$200 in privately run facilities. Additionally, a uniform may be required in a private school kindergarten, adding to this cost.

Prep facilities are part of the Primary School system. Children in prep, attend classes full-time (9am - 3.15pm). They are taught reading, writing and some basic arithmetic. Children generally begin Prep between the ages of 4 to 6, although age 5 is preferred. Fees vary from A\$30 per annum with all books included free of cost in State Schools to A\$500 in Private Schools.

The State Schools call their fees a levy and are not compulsory. Catholic education in primary schools charge between \$100 to \$150 per annum plus a levy of approximately \$140 per year. In addition to this cost, books and uniforms are to be bought separately. Catholic education is considered as private education in Australia. The cost for tuition fees at a State Secondary College for Years 7 to Year 12 are as follows per annum: Year 7 A\$99, Year 8 A\$115, Year 9 A\$145, Year 10 A\$165, Year 11 A\$170, Year 12 A\$170. Books, camps, rental of musical instruments, sporting equipment, uniforms (compulsory in most State Schools) are costed in addition to these fees. The cost for tuition fees at a Catholic School for Year 7 to

Year 12 are as follows per annum: Year 7 & 8 A\$4,500, Year 9 & 10 A\$5,100, Year 11 & 12 A\$5,500.

Although there are exceptions, it appears that up to Grade 6, State Schools are as good, and at times better than comparable U.S. public schools. For years 7 to 12, they may not meet U.S. standards on the occasional subject. English is not approached quite as rigorously as in the U.S.. The student in Australia receives a broader mathematics instruction at any given level, but the short term effect may reduce the student's ability to move back into the U.S. system. In general, education here has been judged by Department of State and Department of Defense experts as adequate. For the individual student, some problems may be experienced initially when entering the Australian system and returning to the U.S. system, but adequate education is available and no major problems should be expected.

Independent or private schools are, for the most part, run or sponsored by churches, e.g., Catholic, Church of England, Presbyterian, Methodist, Jewish. Tuition fees per student ranges from A\$500 to A\$1500, per term depending on the school and the grade of the student. Membership in the sponsoring church is not a requirement. Uniforms are expensive, generally required, and you can expect to pay from A\$200 to A\$350 to outfit one child (for each winter/summer season).

While DoD will reimburse you for tuition, books and travel costs if the local schools are judged inadequate, uniform costs are not reimbursable (see "DoD Assistance to Dependent Children").

Almost all State Schools are co-educational, with the exception of one boys school, Melbourne Boys Secondary College, and a few girls Secondary Colleges, such as McRobertsons Girls and Canterbury Girls Secondary Colleges. However, most the private schools offer single-sex education.

Most Australian States, including Victoria, require that a child attend school until age 15 (approximate completion of 10th grade). Many who quit at this point elect to go to a technical school to learn a trade, or else seek employment.

DoD Assistance to Dependent Children

The Department of Defense has a program geared to assist military and DoD civilians in obtaining an education for their dependents which is comparable to that in the U.S..

If private school enrollment is desired for children in Years 7 and up, the sponsor must submit an application giving justification of the reasons for the choice of the independent school as opposed to the free State Secondary College. Generally, such requests are approved. Request for financial assistance for enrollment at Primary level (Grades 1 to 6) and below is not encouraged by the DoD program. Sponsors may request a waiver to this general policy when it is believed that the education and general well-being of the child might be adversely affected.

Under this DoD sponsored program, the government will pay reasonable tuition costs to those who have obtained approval to enroll their children in private schools. DoD will pay for books and workbooks (not used for religious instruction) and other fees associated with required courses of the curriculum in both State and Independent Schools. The DoD will not pay for the cost of uniforms.

Special Education

Special education services available in Melbourne are comparable in range and quality to those found in a U.S. city of the same size. Mainstreaming, while a goal of the Education Department, lags behind the U.S.. Consequently, most special education schools do not share campuses with, or otherwise interact with regular schools to the same degree found in the U.S.. The level of bureaucratic paper work is lower in Australia. Formal IEPs (in the U.S. sense) are not the norm. Parent-school interaction is highly encouraged. Advance correspondence with the Education Department concerning the special education needs of the child is a must.

Other Education Opportunities

Non-university instruction is available in almost every subject or field, often at a lower cost than similar classes in the U.S.. All sorts of sports, including horsemanship, as well as arts, crafts and languages are well covered. Evening and day classes are available in many subjects.

The CAE (Council of Adult Education) offers day and evening classes. A catalog is published twice yearly. Registration is by phone, mail, or in person. Some courses have waiting lists, but most are not completely filled. Fees are nominal.

Good business and secretarial colleges offer day and evening classes. The best have waiting lists, but admission to most is not a problem. Fees are moderate.

Crowded university facilities limit admission both days and evenings. Inquiries should be made well in advance of registration.

Public Transportation for Students

Many students travel to and from school by public transport. Travel at substantially reduced rates is available to students under the age of 19 who are attending approved schools. Tickets are available by the term or by the year. They are available at the Melbourne's main railway station (Flinders Street Station), and from many other tram, train and bus depots. These tickets cover travel by all three facilities. In Canberra, the public transportation is by bus and in most cases is reimbursable.

Shopping

Melbourne is divided into many suburbs, subdivisions and neighborhoods, most having several butchers, greengrocers, fishmarkets and delicatessens. Some will have country-style markets, open most days of the week. The largest, The Victoria Market, is unique, in that it sells everything from fresh fruits and vegetables to live chickens, sides of beef and lamb, as well as assorted dry goods: clothing, shoes, haberdashery, etc. Local seafood is excellent and varied, with good fish, oysters, shrimp and Spiny Rock Lobster (aka crayfish in Australia). There are many supermarkets with facilities comparable to those found in the U.S..

Canberra has four major city centers (Belconnen, City Central, Tuggeranong and Woden Valley). The various subdivisions and neighborhoods have grocery stores and newsstands. The major city centers are open until 9:00 p.m. on Friday.

Many smaller stores close between 5 and 6 p.m. on weekdays, with most supermarkets in the suburbs trading till 9 or 10 p.m. Thursday and Friday, and the larger supermarkets (such as Coles and Safeway) operating 24 hours - seven days a week. Saturday and Sunday retail trading hours vary, with all shops open until 5 p.m. on Saturday and varying hours on Sunday.

Some grocers and butchers will take orders and deliver free or for small charge. Supermarkets will deliver, but you must do the shopping yourself. Almost every neighborhood has a small low cost delicatessen type shop called a "Milk Bar". The typical milk bar sells (apart from milk), drinks, food and other items, and is often like a very small general store. Milk bars are usually open till around 9-10 p.m. every day. Melbourne also has all the usual food convenience stores, some operating 24 hours a day (such as 7-11, McDonalds, Hungry Jacks, KFC, etc).

Department stores and stores selling general merchandise are slightly less common, and certainly smaller, than those found in the U.S.. This reflects the traditional use of "specialty stores" found in the Australian culture, though the economy puts some constraints on this form of small business. There are many new malls, plazas and shopping centers in the suburbs with many shopping facilities, including a few of the larger department stores.

Gasoline (called "petrol" in Australia - if you ask for "Gas", that is what you will get - Liquid Propane Gas [LPG]) is available 24 hours a day at reasonable prices. Grades are Standard (Regular) and Super (Premium), leaded and unleaded petrol. Prices are volatile and generally between A\$0.70 and A\$0.79 / liter.

GETTING AROUND

Public Transport

Melbourne has an extensive system of public transport. Nearer the city center, trams (we know them as Trolleys) provide transport on a local basis. Outer suburbs are served by a suburban train network. Buses fill in and extend the train network. Tickets for the entire public transport system are available on a two-hourly, daily, weekly, monthly or yearly basis. Fares are computed on a zone system. For example, a monthly ticket for Zones 1 and 2, the inner and next zone, costs A\$102.00. However, the same ticket bought on a daily basis costs A\$6.70, so the savings are considerable. Weekly tickets for Zone 1 and A\$17.30, daily A\$4.10. Weekly tickets for Zone 2 A\$11.80, daily A\$2.80. Although there are the occasional delays and cancellations, the MET systems, as it is known, provides an effective means of getting around, without the hassles of parking and the payments which accompany it.

Canberra relies on their Action (Bus) System. If you are patient and do not mind the wait this is an excellent way to travel. The bus stops are set up to allow no more than a 5 minute walk to any location around the bus stop. This means there is no bus stop close to the US Embassy. However, there are bus stops in front of the Russell Buildings and at all the Shopping Centers.

Driving

Australians drive on the left hand side of the road (and that will require some adjustment on your part). There are not as many freeways as an equivalent size city in the U.S. would have, and some Australians are aggressive drivers. The combination of few freeways and many vehicles make the rush hour considerably stressful at times.

Map books are available for every major city in Australia. In Melbourne, the Melway directory makes it possible to navigate without getting lost. There are about 265 individual large scale maps in the Melway. Streets are shown clearly and are indexed separately. The Melway also lists markets, schools, hospitals, train/tram stops, transport routes, freeways, churches, clubs, beaches, parks, etc. The Melway is sold everywhere and is invaluable. Your sponsor should have one waiting for you when you arrive.

The Royal Automobile Club of Victoria (RACV) has strip maps showing driving routes from Melbourne to other destinations in Australia (a service similar to that provided by AAA in the U.S.). These are free to RACV members. Other benefits of RACV membership include free road service on-call 24 hours a day. Reciprocal membership in RACV is possible if you are already a member of AAA.

Maps and tourist brochures are available from the tourist office of the individual States. Offices for all States are in downtown Melbourne. These offices will also make hotel and air reservations free of charge.

Canberra is a very easy city to navigate. Walter Burley Griffin, An American, designed the city. His plan was for a garden city, with lakes, avenues and terraces rising to the focal point of Parliament House atop Capital Hill. The Canberra Street Directory Map located in front of the Yellow Pages is an invaluable map. It lists markets, schools, hospitals, churches, clubs, parks, etc. Your sponsor should have one waiting for you when you arrive.

EATING OUT

There are an infinite number of restaurants in the Melbourne area. These restaurants present varied ethnic cuisines reflecting immigration from all over the world. At the present time there are Afghan, Arabian, Argentine, Brazilian, Burmese, Cajun/Creole, Chinese, Danish, Dutch, Egyptian, French, German, Greek, Hungarian, Indian, Indonesian, Italian, Jamaican, Japanese, Korean, Lebanese, Malaysian, Mexican, Mongolian, Nepalese, Polish, Russian, Spanish, Swedish, Swiss, Thai, Tibetan, Turkish, and Vietnamese restaurants. If you cannot find anything you like in that list, or for those with simpler tastes, we have Pizza Hut, McDonalds, KFC, Red Rooster and Hungry Jacks (Burger King).

Many of Melbourne's restaurants are BYO (Bring Your Own), not as ridiculous as it sounds. This actually means that you are invited to supply your own wine, liquor or beer, (or not, as you prefer). At a BYO restaurant, you pay only for the food (in some cases for bottle corkage A\$1 or A\$2). Other restaurants (licensed) sell beer, wine and hard liquor. The licensed restaurants tend to be higher priced (sometimes wine can be double the price you would normally pay in a bottle shop, and there is always a chance you will not like their cellar selections). Large chain restaurants with fast service such as Black Angus, Victoria Station, are not known in Australia, however we do have similar outlets such as Sizzlers, Smorgy's Lone Star Steakhouse and Keg Restaurants.

Upon arrival into Canberra, everyone needs to sign in with the US Embassy. The Country Liaison Officer (CLO) will provide a package of recommended restaurants in the area.

MEDICAL AND DENTAL SERVICES

Medical and dental services are considered to be generally comparable to the U.S.. Doctors make house calls. Medical specialties are represented. A referral by a family doctor (general practitioner) is necessary for an appointment with a specialist. Large cities (like Melbourne and Sydney) have the largest and best equipped hospitals. Good medical service is normally available even in remote areas.

Private health plans are operated by a variety of carriers in Australia. They will not be described in detail here, except to say, premiums are generally higher than U.S. plans for general coverage.

Most Americans carry their U.S. hospitalization insurance, since it covers medical problems overseas as well as in the U.S. This is recommended because it provides continuity of coverage. Medical insurance can be refused for “previously existing conditions” for up to two years, though the usual is 12 months. In the event of an illness forced evacuation to the U.S. for you or a dependent, current U.S. medical insurance would be necessary to obtain coverage. You may apply for Australian Medicare to cover your stay in Australia. Medicare will cover 85% of the recommended doctor’s fee, both at your local clinic or in hospital.

Government hospitals are free, however waiting lists are lengthy and you cannot have the doctor of your choice service you or your family. Most Australians opt for private insurance (prices vary according to coverage desired). A\$76 per annum (family rate) will insure you for Ambulance cover in the case of an emergency.

Obviously, dentists use modern methods and equipment. Excellent orthodontic care is available, though it is expensive. Drugstores (known as Chemists) in suburban and city shopping areas, are well stocked with medicines, with some Chemists providing 24-hour service and free delivery.

No unusual health problems or hazards exist in Australia. Sewerage and garbage disposal services are similar to the U.S.. Water supply is ample for household use and normally, except in times of drought, adequate for the garden as well. Water is chlorinated and fluoridated. Safe pasteurized and homogenized milk is available, in full cream, reduced fat and skin milk varieties.

CLIMATE

Firstly, without any bias, Melbourne is possibly one of the most beautiful cities in the world.

No matter which season you arrive in Melbourne, you will be wondering what clothes to wear - by the time you have decided, the weather may have changed completely, but having said that, we still enjoy four distinct seasons, they just don’t arrive in the months they used to, as a matter of fact, sometimes four seasons in one day!

It is simply not worthwhile trying to predict the afternoon’s weather in the morning, or the morning’s by what is predicted for the afternoon. People here joke that the weather bureau has given up trying to predict future weather and simply settles for getting yesterday’s correct.

Generally speaking, a sweater, light coat or jacket which can be removed, is a successful formula, whether it is autumn, winter or spring. Australians have a

tendency to whine about the cold and rug up in winter, (they should try one of your winters!). The snow fields are just around the corner from Melbourne (about 200 kilometers), so some “winter” clothing is appropriate for skiing or just touring. It doesn’t snow in Melbourne, but there is plenty of snow further inland in the mountains.

Evenings all year round are generally cooler than the days, unless the city is in the throes of a heatwave (we complain bitterly about this also). You can depend on perhaps 10 days of uncomfortable heat during the summer months. There is quite a bit of wind all year

Melbourne has a typically Mediterranean climate (except that summer is as changeable as the rest of the year). Hot weather alternates with cool changes in four or five day cycles. Are you confused yet?

The following table may help in your first few weeks as you wonder what might happen next, although the answer is usually anything!

<i>Winter</i>	JUNE JULY AUGUST	Daytime average 57, nights in the low 40’s, rarely down to 32 - generally most rain falls in these months, windy, but no snow
<i>Spring</i>	SEPTEMBER OCTOBER NOVEMBER	Weather very changeable with some beautiful days in the high 70’s and 80’s, then cooler weather again - daytime average 67
<i>Summer</i>	DECEMBER JANUARY FEBRUARY	A few hot days around 100 to 110 with cool changes and moderate weather, nights generally cooler, daytime average 80 - breezes and dry
<i>Autumn</i>	MARCH APRIL MAY	Most stable weather, not much wind, average daytime around 70 - nights much cooler, very beautiful this time of year in Melbourne

Canberra’s Climate can vary through out the day. Where the nights and mornings are cool the days become warm. The following lists the average daily maximum and minimum temperature.

January to March -	82°F - 55 °F
April to June -	66°F - 45 °F
July to September -	52°F - 34 °F
October to December -	68°F - 43 °F

RECREATION

Sports

Australians are enthusiastic outdoor sports people and Australia is noted for fielding “world-class” sporting events and players. Golf, tennis and basketball are perhaps the most popular sports because they are played all year round. Swimming, sailing, fishing, surfing, windsurfing and skin-diving (scuba divers must be certified) are also very popular. The water temperature in Victoria is similar to that found on the California coast, but warm water and tropical conditions can be found on the northern coasts.

Good ski slopes can be found in the mountains around 200 kilometers northeast of Melbourne and 208 kilometers southwest of Canberra. New Zealand has fabulous skiing just a short (but expensive) air hop across the Tasman Sea. Australian Rules football is an amazing spectacle which attracts huge crowds in the winter as cricket does in the summer. Soccer is increasing in popularity with the influx of new Australians from European countries. Some baseball and softball (fast pitch) are also played. The latter enjoying a current upsurge in popularity. Melbourne has both private and public golf courses and the best of these, such as Royal Melbourne Golf Club are amongst the world’s finest.

Tennis clubs are numerous and excellent; clay, grass and composition courts are available. Many of the tennis clubs admit children. Indoor tennis is available (often as an adjunct to a more general purpose health club). Health clubs also have squash, racquetball and handball. Most health clubs have heated pools. The cost to join varies, but can range from A\$200 to A\$400 per course, or annual rates.

Deep sea, lake and river fishing are possible in the Melbourne area. Boats may be chartered for fishing at many fishing spots. Trout fishing is especially good in the State of Tasmania. Batemans Bay is considered “Canberra’s Beach” and is 149 kilometers away. Batemans Bay has river cruises, deep-sea fishing, scuba diving, and walking through the bush.

Hunting or “shooting” of ducks, birds and some animals is possible in many areas. Target shooting can be arranged through one of the various rifle clubs. Handguns are prohibited in Victoria and Canberra. Anything other than “single-shot” rifles and shotguns are now having to be handed in to collection points, subject to Federal Laws which have recently been enacted. If you intend to import a shotgun or rifle, you must obtain written permission from the Consulate-General, who will provide a letter stipulating the conditions. For Canberra contact US Embassy Security Office (RS0) at 61 2 6214 5733.

Touring and Sightseeing

Australia is great for traveling. All the Australian States (6) and the Northern Territory run travel bureaus with offices in Melbourne and Canberra. All services and information for these government travel bureaus is free; they are an excellent source of information. They are always happy to book tours and accommodation.

There are many one or two day trips to be made near Melbourne. Plans, maps, and general tourist information for long or short tours may be obtained from the Royal Automobile Club of Victoria, the New South Wales Tourist Bureau and the South Australian Tourist Bureau.

Melbourne itself has many outstanding attractions, among them: the Royal Botanic Gardens, the National Art Gallery and Victorian Arts Center, the new Melbourne Museum and several old National Trust Homes in the surrounding suburbs.

The Zoo in Melbourne has a wonderful selection of Australian fauna, as well as new and imaginative enclosures, built to suit the natural habitat of the many and varied animals from around the globe.

We boast an excellent wildlife sanctuary at Healesville which is approximately 80 kilometers northeast of Melbourne in the foothills of the Great Dividing Range. There, one can see the shy Lyre Birds, Emus, Wombats, Kangaroos, Wallabies and Koalas in their natural habitat. Some of these can be viewed at close range, the most peculiar of these is our duck-billed Platypus, whose specially constructed tank allows you to witness its natural day-to-day habits.

We also have a very new Safari Park at Werribee, some twenty kilometers to the west of Melbourne. Here you are able to hop into a small mini-bus which holds approximately 15 people and travel through the park witnessing animals such as Rhinos, Giraffes, Bison, and Deer, living in their natural habitat.

The beaches inside Port Phillip Bay run for over 50 miles from Melbourne down the Mornington Peninsula, with the nearest ocean surf beaches being just outside the bay, about 90 minutes drive. Touring along the Peninsula inside and out, is quite wonderful.

The Great Ocean Road along the Southern coast of Victoria to the west is a breathtaking way to get to South Australia. The Great Ocean Road runs by some of the most spectacular coastal scenery in the world.

Canberra is located 8 hours from Melbourne and 3.5 hours from Sydney. The country's capital is set in around Lake Burley Griffin and framed by the city's four hills. Some of the places to visit in Canberra are Australian War Memorial, Black Mountain Tower, Mount Stromlo Observatory, National Aquarium Australian Wildlife Sanctuary, and Tidbinbilla Nature Reserve.

Entertainment

Melbourne has many theaters whose productions include musicals and plays from Broadway and London, often with imported casts and stars, but also often with good local talent. There are also several repertory companies which present regular seasons with runs up to five or six weeks for each play.

The Victorian Arts Center, comprising one large and several small concert halls, the National Gallery of Victoria and the Performing Arts Center, provides facilities for the regular seasons of opera, ballet and drama. In addition, many times during the year, there are visiting orchestras, chamber music groups and soloists. A series of outdoor concerts called "Music for the People" is given by the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra in the summer months at the Sidney Myer Music Bowl.

Several film societies present old and new films on a monthly basis, some have special Film Festivals running a week or more. Special programs featuring returns of old favorites are very popular. Additionally, there is the usual run of contemporary films present on a public basis throughout all of Greater Melbourne. The cinema costs A\$10 per ticket. First run films from the U.S. appear about 6 months after the U.S. release. Video rental shops are popular and readily accessible. Average hire cost for video tapes are from around \$5 for new releases.

Melbourne has six television stations available to all the public: three commercial stations (Channels 7, 9 and 10), one public station (ABC - Channel 2), Channel 11 and public broadcasting station and Channel 28/SBS which broadcasts foreign language films, documentaries and foreign language variety shows. The languages reflect the composition of non-English speaking Australians and include Greek, Italian, French, German, Swedish, Russian, Chinese, Japanese, Yugoslavian, Spanish, Portuguese and Dutch. We also have a selection of cable channels, which are available through Optus and Foxtel - for a small fee of course!

Canberra has many delightful museums and exhibitions. Some of the recommended places to visit are the Old and New Parliament House, Nationals Gallery of Australia, National Museum of Australia, and Cockington Green.

There are a large number of AM and FM radio stations. The frequency assignments are identical to the U.S.. The stations are wide and varied and cover Top 40, classical, country and western, jazz, opera, rhythm and blues, foreign music and talkback programs.

Our Melbourne Cup horse race is an annual event held on the first Tuesday of every November and is considered to be the outstanding international race meeting of the year. This being a major social event, it is also a local holiday in the Melbourne metropolitan area.

The Royal Agricultural Show is held in September and is similar to a State or County Fair in the U.S.. We also enjoy our annual week long Moomba carnival, sponsored

by the City of Melbourne each year in March. Moomba is similar to the Mardi Gras in New Orleans.

MAIL

U.S. mail is delivered through the Military Postal System. This system (called the APO system) is for all practical purposes an extension of the U.S. Postal Service. Most normal postal services are available (including insured, certified and registered mail). For letters and parcels, normal U.S. postage is sufficient.

The Melbourne post office is in the DCM Australia office at Level 6, 553 St Kilda Road. Your new mailing address is:

Name:
P.O. Box
APO AP 96551

The Canberra post office is located in the US Embassy. Your new mailing address is:

Name:
PSC 277 Box XXX
APO AP 96549

Mail from the U.S. is delivered entirely by air (making Airmail postage a waste of money). Customs examination takes place at the Melbourne Post Office. Mail is delivered daily to the APO.

You can use the APO system to order from the U.S. catalog houses. Sears, Penneys, Bell, Best, and the Armed Forces Exchange have large mail order facilities. You should be aware that some items are too large or too heavy (70lb weight limit) to mail. Australian Customs and Quarantine Regulations apply to APO mail. Some items such as fresh fruit, vegetables and meat are prohibited and will be confiscated by Quarantine Officers. Customs declarations are advised on all parcels sent to Australia via APO.

The Post Office will forward all mail for an indefinite period and also forward magazines without postage due, if you take a copy of your PCS orders with you when filling out a forwarding request at your local Post Office. Normally, the Post Office will only forward mail for one year and will not forward magazines and third class mail.

CHILD CARE

There are child care services available at both licensed and unlicensed facilities in Melbourne. The quality, cost and hours of operation vary greatly and will be **PCS**

dependent upon your requirements. If you desire more information on this subject, please contact your sponsor.

The US Embassy has a list of approved child care providers. Contact the CLO for this information.

TELEPHONE/INTERNET

The telephone exchange system is quite comparable to that of the US, except in price. Local service is quite expensive (\$20-80/month) and is dependent on the number of phone calls you make a month (.25/call). There are several long distance carriers available to use from home and the costs are quite comparable to US rates.

Internet service is still growing in Australia. There are a number of internet service providers to choose from and cost will be dependent upon your requirements. A typical 33.6k connection with unlimited access (2hr blocks) costs between \$40-65/month.

THINGS TO BRING AND THINGS TO LEAVE BEHIND

The following list of things to bring is a composite of many suggestions. For many of the items, the difficulty is not that something particular is not available, but that it is named the same but is really a different product. For each item in the list below, a reason is given. Some of the items may not apply to you.

- * **Money**

You initial cash outlay will be large. Many of your initial expenses are reimbursable but reimbursement may be delayed. A minimum of \$5,000 is suggested. Credit cards may be used for most expenses to defer payment until reimbursement is received.

- * **Paper Towels and other Paper Products**

Australian paper towels are a different size and won't fit into our towel holders correctly. All paper products in Australia are expensive. Stationery is very expensive, although the variety is quite good. Seasonal greeting cards (e.g., Christmas, Valentine's Day etc.) napkins, plates, etc., are available, but twice the U.S. price.

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- * **Cereal**
Breakfast cereal is widely available, but many brands are unfamiliar. Some cereals appear at first glance to be the same, but the formulation is slightly different. A note to your sponsor will tell you if anything close to what you like is available. For example, you cannot buy “Cheerios”, but several versions of Rice Crispies are available. If you only eat one cereal, you may want to stock up.
 - * **Pudding**
Australian pudding is different. They don’t have the equivalent of Jello Pudding and Pie Filling or the range of pudding available in the U.S.. No instant Tapioca or Pistachio for example.
 - * **Lunch Bags**
Australian lunch bags don’t have a flat bottom and will hold a sandwich, but little else.
 - * **Over the Counter-Medicines**
You may not be able to obtain your favorite over the counter medicine here. The medicine will probably be more expensive if available. Bring an extra supply and check with your sponsor about local availability. Aspirin substitutes are available.
 - * **Prescription Medicine**
Ask your doctor for several prescriptions of any medicine you must take on a daily basis, these will suffice, at least until you find an Australian doctor. Since many prescription drugs are known here under a different brand name, ask your physician to write the “generic” name of the drug on the prescription. Unlimited refill prescriptions are not available in Australia but drug prices are subsidized.
 - * **Deodorant, Shampoo, Cosmetics and Perfume**
Not all U.S. brands of deodorant and shampoo are available. Stock up on your favorite brand. Cosmetics and perfumes are extremely expensive in comparison to U.S. prices
 - * **Local Telephone Books**
You might wish to look up phone numbers back home. Most telephones are hooked up for international direct dialing. The connection to a U.S. number usually takes no more than 10 to 15 seconds.
 - * **Credit Cards**
Don’t leave home without them. Most places in this part of the world take credit cards. American Express Visa, Diners Club, etc., have a local office where you can pay bills. The local American Express office sells U.S. dollar denominated travelers checks. Visa and Mastercard are useful when ordering from American mail order catalogues.

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- * **Washcloths**
Most Australian hotels do not supply washcloths.
 - * **Charcoal Grill**
Australians love to barbecue and you will learn to enjoy it as well. Pack your grill and also some charcoal briquettes. Australians use compressed coal briquettes which take getting used to. Bring enough charcoal to last for a while. Do not bring lighter fluid.
 - * **U.S. Electrical Plugs**
Plugs here are different and you will not be able to obtain a local replacement if a power cord plug is bad.
 - * **Extension Cords**
Transformers are heavy and you will not want to move them around. You should bring a variety of extension cords. Australian homes often have only one or two power outlets per room.
 - * **Hand Tools**
They often cost more than the same tools in the U.S..
 - * **Power Tools**
Bring those that you want to use. Most will run off transformers. Local power tools are expensive and unusable back in the U.S..
 - * **Garden Tools**
They come in handy in your new home.
 - * **Mail Order Catalogs**
We use Sears, Penneys, and other mail order houses to obtain products that are unavailable (or expensive) in Australia.
 - * **Book Club Membership**
Books are very expensive here. If you belong to a book club hang on to your membership. Mail delays make “negative option” memberships impractical but most book clubs have a membership where they only ship a book if they get a card. They are reluctant to mention these memberships, but they will let you have one if you explain that postage costs (which they pay) from refused books will cost them money.

The following is a list of items to leave behind, based on past DCM Australia personnel past personal experiences. Please look at the reason given to see if it really applies to you.

- * **Standard TV Sets**
See the section regarding Household Furnishings for information about television sets and other appliances.

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- * **King Size Beds**
Australian bedrooms are generally quite small. A queen size bed will fit - but in some cases a double bed will crowd the bedroom. Some Americans have been able to find houses with bedrooms adequate for a kingsize bed. If you bring a large bed it will limit your house selection.
 - * **Light Bulbs**
110 volt bulbs do not work in Australia.
 - * **Electric Charcoal Starter**
They draw too much current on a transformer.
 - * **Anything you won't use**
You will find that storage space in Australian homes is limited. Take a good look at what you are going to ship and ask yourself if you are really going to need it.

THINGS TO BUY

The following is a list of things to buy because the article in question is an expensive purchase item.

- * Shoes
- * Socks
- * Sheets, pillowcases and towels
- * Cotton goods (socks, T-shirts, etc)
- * Perfume and cosmetics
- * Kodak Print Film Processing Mailers (but not slide mailers)
- * Women's hosiery and lingerie items